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EPA Award of 8.7 Million Essential for Success in California's Nonpoint Source Program

Grant to California Water Board Supports Oyster Production and Recreation at Tomales Bay in Marin County

SAN FRANCISCO —A grant from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in July 2020 to California's Water Board assisted ranchers implementation of management practices on their land, helping to ensure Tomales Bay in Marin County, California is able to sustain oyster production and recreational activities including kayaking and fishing. Models estimate that the interagency partnership among California's North Coast Water Board, ranchers, and the Point Reyes National Seashore will prevent nearly 4,000 pounds of nitrogen, 150,000 pounds of phosphorus, and 1,300 tons of sediment from entering Tomales Bay each year.

In 2020, the California State Water Board approved more than \$700,000 to help ranchers implement management practices on their land through the *Conserving Our Watersheds* (COW) Program. The Program helps ensure Tomales Bay continues to sustain oyster production and recreational uses like kayaking and fishing through implementation of best management practices designed to improve the environment within the watershed. The award supports local projects to make waters safer for people and wildlife, such as reducing sediment runoff after wildfire, restoring stream habitat affected by legacy timber activities, controlling pollution from grazing and livestock operations, and planting cover crops to improve soil health.

"The COW Program, which promotes and supports water quality improvements within Marin County's watershed boundaries will reduce runoff of sediment, nutrients, and bacteria from livestock operations into Tomales Bay," **said EPA Pacific Southwest Acting Regional Administrator Deborah Jordan.**

The Program works to reduce erosion and sedimentation; reduce the number of pathogens entering the watershed; plant along streams to cool stream temperatures for wildlife habitats and endangered species; reduce runoff pollution by fencing out riparian areas, installing biotechnical streambank repairs, planting stream corridors and repairing gully erosion; and improve upstream grazing lands to indirectly improve water quality at nearby beaches, estuaries & coastal waters by reducing pathogens, E. coli, sediments and nutrients.

In July 2020, EPA awarded the State Water Board \$8.7 million under CWA 319, funds essential for California's Nonpoint Source Program Implementation Plan. The annual award supports Water Board staff who develop permits, educate stakeholders, conduct inspections, and work to find effective solutions for water quality problems.

In December 2020, EPA approved California's 2020-2025 Nonpoint Source Program Implementation Plan, allowing California to continue seeking grant funds from EPA under Clean Water Act (CWA) section 319. Since 2004, the State Water Board has received from EPA and awarded over \$65 million of CWA 319 grant funds to local projects to reduce nonpoint source pollution in waters of the State of California.

The goal is to continue to build excellent stewardship practices into the everyday work of ranching and farming in Marin County, California. This is accomplished by providing private landowners and agricultural producers with project planning and permitting assistance; technical and engineering expertise; construction contractors; and maintenance and monitoring assistance.

For more information on nonpoint source pollution visit: [[HYPERLINK "https://www.epa.gov/nps/basic-information-about-nonpoint-source-nps-pollution"](https://www.epa.gov/nps/basic-information-about-nonpoint-source-nps-pollution)]

For more information on 319 Grant Program for States and Territories: [[HYPERLINK "https://www.epa.gov/nps/319-grant-program-states-and-territories"](https://www.epa.gov/nps/319-grant-program-states-and-territories)]

For information on Success Stories about Restoring Water Bodies Impaired by Nonpoint Source Pollution: [[HYPERLINK "https://www.epa.gov/nps/success-stories-about-restoring-water-bodies-impaired-nonpoint-source-pollution"](https://www.epa.gov/nps/success-stories-about-restoring-water-bodies-impaired-nonpoint-source-pollution) \ | "ca"]

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